

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5750

---

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 22, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to insurance coverage for neurodevelopmental therapies.

**Brief Description:** Requiring coverage for neurodevelopmental therapies.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fairley, Regala, Fraser, Keiser, Marr, Berkey, Rasmussen, Kohl-Welles and Murray.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/08/07, 2/22/07 [DP, w/oRec].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Fairley, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Marr and Parlette.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Carrell.

**Staff:** Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

**Background:** In 1990, neurodevelopmental therapy became a mandated benefit for children age six and under, for large group policies. Neurodevelopmental disabilities relate to the development of the central nervous system or brain, and often impact motor, speech, social, and learning skills. Related therapies often include speech, occupational, and physical therapies.

Limited neurodevelopmental therapy is available in schools; however, the therapy services required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are required to be educationally relevant to allow a child to participate in the educational program. They are not intended to address the more general needs of the child.

**Summary of Bill:** Neurodevelopmental therapies are a covered benefit for children 18 and under, for large group policies, including the policy for state employees.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This isn't a new mandate. It is just extending the age that children are eligible for coverage. It doesn't make sense to stop serving children at age six. The school system provides very limited services and is too heavily burdened by the special needs of these children to adequately provide the range of services they need. The Department of Health sunrise review completed in 2001 recommended this coverage for all ages, with no age limitation. These types of services are provided for children if they are injured after they are born, irrespective of age, but not if the child is born with the disability.

CON: A delayed effective would allow the carriers to adjust their administrative systems.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Fairley, prime sponsor; Senator Rasmussen; Leanne Roe, Citizens for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ARC) and SEIU 775; Melissa Johnson, Washington Speech and Hearing Association and Physical Therapy Association; Donna Obermeyer, Washington State Special Education Coalition.

CON: Nancee Wildermuth, Regence Blue Shield, Aetna, and PacifiCare.